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CHRISTMAS CONVERSATIONS

LADY CHARLES FITZROY.

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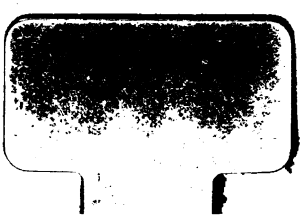

CHRISTMAS CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN

A LADY AND A COTTAGE NEIGHBOUR

ON THE

FORTY-FIFTH PSALM.

WITH REMARKS SELECTED FROM THE WORKS OF BISHOP HORSLEY AND OTHERS.

BY

LADY CHARLES FITZROY.

The profits, if any, arising from the publication of the following pages will be given to the School for Children of Mental Deficiency at Bath.

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WHEN so much has been written, and so ably, on the PSALMS, it may appear presumptuous to offer anything more on that subject. But it has been thought, that an attempt to bring the remarks of some of the best writers on one of the most beautiful of those compositions within the reach of many who cannot have access to their works, might be useful and interesting to a large proportion of readers.

May He, who is often pleased to employ the humblest instruments in effecting His gracious purposes, bestow a blessing on this endeavour to serve my fellow-creatures.

A. C. F.

CHRISTMAS CONVERSATIONS,

&c.

I.

THE FORTY-FIFTH PSALM.

Mrs. C. Good day, Mrs. Penrice, I knew I should find you at home, and I thought a visit might not be unwelcome, as you would probably be alone this Christmas afternoon.

Mrs. Penrice. I thank you, madam; your visits are always most welcome to me, and I take it very kind of you coming to me; I am never able, on account of rheumatism and lameness, to go out, even to church, during the winter, except on a few very fine mild days; but as, blessed be God! I am not quite helpless, and can occupy myself with reading

and communion between God and my own thoughts, I should be very sorry to detain my children and grandchildren from enjoying themselves; and though it may not be what some would call a merry Christmas, it is always a very happy day to me, and must be to all Christians who employ their leisure in dwelling on the great mercy of God vouchsafed at this time to us.

Mrs. C. I see that you are reading the Psalms appointed by the Church to be read on this day as particularly proper for the occasion.

Mrs. P. Yes, madam, and I was just wishing for some one better instructed than myself to answer me some questions I should like to ask about the forty-fifth Psalm.

Mrs. C. I shall be very happy, Mrs. Penrice, to give you any information that is in my power.

Mrs. P. One thing I wished to ask you, madam, is, whether it is known on what occasion David composed this Psalm. The reason I ask this, is because Mrs. Denman of the Grange Farm, who is often very kind in coming to sit and talk with me, showed me a very old Bible, I think of Queen Elizabeth's time, which her husband bought in a lot with many others at the sale of Eastfield Manor; and in that Bible the forty-fifth Psalm is said to describe the greatness of Solomon, and the blessing of his marriage with an Egyptian woman; but in

this Bible of mine, it seems to refer entirely to our Saviour Jesus Christ, as it is headed, " The glory of the Church and the benefits thereof."

Mrs. C. It is true that some learned persons have supposed this Psalm, which is undoubtedly a poetical composition in the form of a marriage song, to have been composed for the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Among these persons appears to have been Calvin, whom you have doubtless heard of, as one of those bold and able men who saw and called the attention of others to the errors of the Church of Rome, and effected the Reformation in many, particularly the northern countries of Europe. I have heard my husband say that Calvin was a very good and learned man, but that not having any taste for poetry, the allegory was lost upon him, and therefore he read it as matter of fact. The first English translation of the Bible was made and published by some English Protestants at Geneva, where Calvin was held in great veneration, and this may account for the heading of the Psalm in the old Bible you mention, which was afterwards altered to the present.

Mrs. P. Then you think, madam, this has nothing to d o with Solomon. Yet being in the form of a marriage song, how should this be if it has not reference to a marriage?

Mrs. C. You know that both in the Old and New Testaments the union of our Saviour and his Church is represented as that between husband and wife. If you will let me take up the Bible that lies beside you, I think we can soon turn to some of those passages.

In the 54th and 62nd chapters of Isaiah, both of them parts of a very extensive prophecy, understood by all commentators to refer to Christ and his Church, we find in the 5th verse of the one, "Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name." In the 5th verse of the other, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

In the 3rd chapter of Jeremiah, which contains most gracious promises of God to the penitent, we find exhortations to repentance and amendment enforced with the declaration in the 14th verse, "For I am married unto you."

Our Lord himself in one of his parables likened the kingdom of heaven to a feast made by a king at the marriage of his son, as we read in the 22nd chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

In many parts of the Revelation our Saviour is spoken of under the figure of the Lamb, and the Church as his bride. And I am sure, Mrs. Penrice, you will remember, as I do, that the same idea is carried all through the exhortation of St. Paul

to the duties of husbands and wives in the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, and introduced into the marriage service, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church! For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Mrs. P. Yes, madam, I remember that well; and I bless and thank God with all my heart, for I think He was pleased to hear and grant the prayer

I then made, that my husband and myself might be enabled to fulfil the duties pointed out to us. But I believe I thought of that passage of Scripture then only as relating to ourselves, though I always considered that our Saviour and his disciples had done great honour to the holy state of matrimony by speaking of it in the manner they did. Now I see why the 45th Psalm is so very proper to be read on this day, when we celebrate Christ's coming on earth to establish his Church in the world.

Mrs. C. Even the Jews have always considered it as prophetic of the Messiah and his people; and none of them have applied it to the marriage of any earthly prince. If you like, I will repeat to you, as well as I can, the reasons given by a very learned prelate, Bishop Horsley, why it could not be so applied.

Mrs. P. I shall be greatly obliged to you, madam.

Mrs. C. It is true that in the Song of Solomon the union of Christ and his Church is figured in the love of Solomon and his bride. But the 45th Psalm differs much from the Song of Solomon. There are some passages applicable to Solomon or any other earthly king. Others cannot be applied to him. He was no warrior; his love of righteousness and hatred to wickedness were not such as are here mentioned; he had not a numerous pro-

geny made princes over all the earth; he had but one son, Rehoboam, who was king, and who lost great part of his kingdom.

Mrs. P. All this seems very clear.

Mrs. C. Now would you like, Mrs. Penrice, that we should read the Psalm together, and for me to tell you all that I can remember from different books on the subject?

Mrs. P. Very much indeed, madam, if you will have the goodness.

Mrs. C. We shall take the Bible version, as that is, generally speaking, very superior to that of the Prayer-Book.

"*My heart is inditing a good matter.*" That means, my heart is full of an important and glorious subject, and I am going to give utterance to the thoughts with which I am inspired by it.

Mrs. P. It was indeed a glorious subject, as you have shown me; and I suppose the whole scheme of redemption was by the power of God made clear to the mind of David.

Mrs. C. There is no doubt that God enabled David to predict even the minute circumstances of our Saviour's sufferings for our sake, as well as the glorious consequences resulting from them, with as much minuteness one thousand years before as if he had been recording them after they had taken place. He said of himself, as the end of his event-

ful life was approaching, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."

Mrs. P. I do not quite so well understand the next sentence, "*I speak of the things which I have made touching the king.*"

Mrs. C. The things that I have *made* must probably mean the things that I have *meditated upon*, or that I have *composed*. Or, it is said, the original might be more easily rendered, "I address my performance to the king," for the word which we have translated *touching* might as justly be *unto*.

And now I should tell you that the Jewish expositors, who certainly cannot be suspected of straining any coincidence between the history of our Lord in the New Testament and the prophecies relating to Him in the Old Testament, have always understood the appellation of *king* in the Psalms as designating the Messiah.

But the Jews, in their present state of blindness, little think how peculiarly this Psalm applies to themselves. For in the Old Testament prophecies the Redeemer and his Church are represented by the figure of marriage at two separate times,—a separation on account of misconduct,—and a reunion after repentance and reformation. The first marriage was the institution of the Mosaic covenant, which it pleased Almighty God to establish between

himself and his chosen people Israel whom He had brought out of Egypt, and is more than once referred to by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The separation was the dispersion of the Jews by the Romans, when their city and temple were destroyed, and the Mosaic worship abolished; then, indeed, did the sceptre depart from Judah, as Jacob on his death-bed had predicted it would when Shiloh should come. Shiloh, you know, was one of the appellations given to our Saviour.

Isaiah predicts the restoration of the erring wife to the favour of her husband, in a passage which I will read to you, if you will give me leave. "Blush not, for thou shalt not be brought to reproach; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and the reproach of thy deserted state thou shalt no more remember. For thy Maker is thy husband, Jehovah of Hosts is his name; and He who claims thee is the Holy One of Israel. As a woman forsaken and deeply afflicted, Jehovah hath recalled thee, and as a wife wedded in youth, but afterwards rejected, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I receive thee again."

So also in the Apocalypse, St. John, using the same figure, tells us of a proclamation being made in heaven, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." And then

one of the seven angels having called to St. John, "Come hither, and I will show thee the Lamb's wife," shows him "the holy Jerusalem," or church of the converted Jews.

Thus we may conclude that the marriage alluded to in the 45th Psalm, represents the reunion of Jesus Christ with the Jewish Church to take place at the second advent, when his glory and majesty will be shown to all the world, and the Jews restored to favour.

This is a prospect which must, I think, be joyfully contemplated by all Christians, when they consider the long and deep sufferings of that misguided people, and also their continued faithful adherence to the Mosaic institutions which they imagine to be still in force.

Mrs. P. Dear madam, how satisfactory it is to observe the connexion of different parts of the Holy Scriptures!

Mrs. C. The only reasonable and safe way of solving and explaining the difficult passages in the Bible, and many such there undoubtedly are, is by comparing them one with another; and if, after doing so, we cannot satisfy ourselves, we must humbly submit to remain for a while in ignorance, trusting that it will please God to give us grace to understand whatever it is necessary for us to know.

Let us now go on with the consideration of the

Psalm. The remaining clause of the first verse, "*My tongue is the pen of a ready writer,*" needs no comment.

Mrs. P. No, madam; the expression in common use makes that quite clear.

Mrs. C. This first verse, however, is only the opening or preamble to the main subject of the psalm. I am now going to repeat to you, as well as I can, the explanation given of it by a very learned prelate.

Mrs. P. Will you, if you please, madam, tell me his name?

Mrs. C. Bishop Horsley. He lived and was very celebrated during the latter half of the last century. I do not think it very likely his works should fall in your way, for they are very expensive.

Mrs. P. I shall be then the more obliged to you, madam, for what you will tell me of them.

Mrs. C. In Bishop Horsley's consideration of the Psalm, he divided it into three sections, representing, as he thought, so many divisions of the whole interval of time from our Lord's first appearance in the flesh to the final triumph of the Church upon his second advent.

The first section consists of the second verse only, and is descriptive of our Lord during the

time He assumed the nature of man and abode on earth.

The second section is composed of the next five verses; I dare say you will keep your eye on them while I am speaking. They describe the successful propagation of the Gospel, and our Lord's victory over his enemies. This comprehends the whole period from the time that our Lord, in the sight of his apostles near Bethany, ascended into heaven, and took his station at the right hand of his Father, having fulfilled his divine mission on earth, till the time, not yet arrived, of the fulfilling of the Gentiles.

The third section, consisting of the last ten verses, exhibits the re-marriage, that is, the conversion of the Jews, and their restoration in consequence to the religious privileges so long forfeited.

Now, if you please, I will endeavour to show you how these important subjects are prefigured in these several parts.

Mrs. P. Pray do, madam.

The second verse, "*Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever;*" as I have said just now, refers to the period of our Lord Jesus Christ's abode on earth. The first

clause applies properly to Him of whom St. Paul says, that "He was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." (Heb. i. 3.) And the prophet Zechariah exclaims in an inspired vision,—"How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!"

Mrs. P. It is not known, I suppose, madam, what sort of looking person Jesus Christ in his human nature was?

Mrs. C. We have no account of our Saviour's person, except that after his return to Nazareth from attending with his parents the celebration of the Passover at Jerusalem, being then twelve years old, He is described as "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man;" which may seem to indicate, that while his mind attained infinite wisdom, his body also acquired, by the full proportions of strength, beauty, and grace, the perfection of manhood. We all know that the existence of superior intellect, benevolence, or any other estimable mental quality, will impart to the human countenance a charm quite independent of regularity or good form of features. And it has often been observed that there is something which seems to savour of heaven in the look of those whose minds have dwelt much on holy things, and have appeared to hold a degree of communion with their Maker. We are told that after Moses had been

permitted to behold the glory of God on Mount Sinai, his face shone with such radiant light "the Israelites were afraid to come nigh to him." Also that when "certain of the synagogue of the Libertines, disputing with Stephen, were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake, and brought him to the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of angel."

When, also, we bear in mind that, in the account given to us of the creation, it is said that God made man in his own image, we have reason to think that the human form of our Saviour must have presented to the eye everything that we can conceive of transcendent beauty. Moreover, it is reasonable to conceive from the respect and attention in many instances shown to Him, and the manner in which his discourses were received, that there was unusual dignity in his external appearance and manner. Doubtless you remember the account given in the fourth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, of his being called upon, as was then customary, to read and expound a portion of Scripture in the synagogue at Nazareth, when, having selected that remarkable passage in Isaiah's prophecy, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-

hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;" we are told that the eyes of all present were fastened on Him, and that all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Probably, therefore, the prophecy that He should be adorned with beauty beyond the sons of men was literally fulfilled in the person of our Saviour, as well as in the moral beauty of his character.

Mrs. P. I should think, madam, from all that you have said, there could be little doubt of it. And yet there might seem to be a contradiction to this opinion in one passage of the 53rd chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah, which I have always understood was to be applied to our Saviour; and indeed is so exactly descriptive of Him, that any person reading that chapter, without knowing it to be a part of the Old Testament, would rather suppose it had been written by one of the evangelists after his death. I allude to the second verse, where it is said, "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

Mrs. C. I think those words should be understood as expressing in a figurative sense the poor and humble condition it pleased the Lord of all to

assume during the time He spent on earth; the very reverse of the worldly advantages and splendour of earthly sovereigns with which the Jews expected to behold the Messiah invested whenever He should come among them.

Mrs. P. I see, madam.

Mrs. C. We will now proceed, if you please. Of the just application of the next clause, "Grace is poured into thy lips,"—or rather, it should be *upon* thy lips,—to our Saviour, we can have no doubt, with the record we have in the gospels of the eloquence of his doctrines and parables, and the effect produced on such of his hearers whose ears and hearts were not closed by prejudice against Him. Even the enemies of our Lord declared that "Never man spake like this man;" and the officers sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to take Him and bring Him before them, gave this as a reason why they could not resolve to offer Him any violence.

But further, "Grace is poured upon thy lips," expresses the perfection, sublimity, excellence, and sweetness of the doctrine delivered by the blessed Jesus. Sublime in being far above the discovery of human wisdom; excellent by its salutary effects and operation upon men, raising their minds to the knowledge of the true God; sweeter to the regenerate soul than honey and the honeycomb to the

palate, by the disclosure of the great scheme of redemption in all its branches—the incarnation, atonement, and intercession of the Redeemer, and the succour of the Holy Spirit. "This doctrine," —I am now, Mrs. Penrice, quoting the exact words of Bishop Horsley,—" cherishing the contrite, consoling the afflicted, banishing despair, raising the fallen, justifying sinners, giving life to the dead,—in a word, the glad tidings of salvation,—this is the grace which is poured over the lips of the Son of God."

Mrs. P. Full of grace, indeed, is his doctrine, and calls for an eternity of gratitude from us to whom He was pleased mercifully to address it.

Mrs. C. Then for the remainder of the verse,—" Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." We are to observe, that in holy writ the happiness and glory to which the human nature is advanced in the person of Jesus, both God and man, now seated on the throne of God in heaven, are represented as the reward of his obedience.

Mrs. P. Truly did He, who was Himself God, set us an example of perfect obedience to the will of God.

Mrs. C. We come now to the second section, in which, as well as in many of the Prophecies, particularly in the 34th and 63rd chapters of Isaiah, our Lord is described as a warrior. The enemies He

had to deal with are the wicked passions of men, the devil in his wiles and machinations, and the persecuting powers of the world.

Perhaps, Mrs. Penrice, you will read aloud one verse at a time from the Bible, that we may examine them individually and successively.

Mrs. P. Most willingly, madam. (Verse 3.) "*Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty! with thy glory and thy majesty.*"

Mrs. C. Bishop Horsley, whom I have before named to you, says the words, "O most mighty," do not sufficiently express in English the power and valour of Christ as denoted in the Hebrew title; and that the rest of the verse is but imperfectly rendered, and might rather be,

"Warrior! gird thy sword upon thy thigh; buckle on thy refulgent dazzling armour."

Of course these, the sword and the armour, were named as emblems of that sovereign authority in which the Lord of all the world should hereafter appear among men.

The sword of Messiah is his word, with which He made his glory and majesty known throughout the world. St. Paul describes it,—the word of God, in his epistle to the Hebrews,—the whole of which seems intended to prove that the Gospel plan of salvation was prefigured and foretold in the Old Testament,—as "quick, powerful, and sharper than

any two-edged sword," (Heb. iv. 12,)—terms, the propriety of which cannot be doubted by any who have duly attended to, and believed the divine promises and threatenings. Also, in writing from Rome to his Ephesian converts, and adopting the figure of military armour, St. Paul recommends them to "take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephes. vi. 17.) And the right understanding of this word of God will enable us to resist, and, if it be neeessary, to assault our spiritual adversaries.

Mrs. P. I think, madam, we have both an illustration of this prophecy, and an example for our own use, in the manner of our blessed Lord's repelling the attempts of Satan to draw Him into rebellion against the Almighty Father of all. To each of his wicked suggestions, Jesus opposed only, but decisively, the unalterable words of the Holy Scriptures.

Mrs. C. Very true, Mrs. Penrice, and well would it be, if in all our disagreements with our fellow-creatures, whether respecting worldly matters, or differences in our religious opinions, we acted in the spirit of our blessed Master, and applied to the same source for our arguments.

Isaiah had also foretold of the Messiah, that He should "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth." (Isaiah ii. 4.) And St. John, in the

Book of the Revelation, describes that "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword," (Rev. i. 16,) and that "with it He should smite the nations." (Rev. xix. 15.)

We may now proceed to the fourth verse.

Mrs. P. (Verse 4.) *And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*"

Mrs. C. Bishop Horsley says this should be rendered, "Take aim, be prosperous, pursue in the cause of truth, humility, and righteousness;" that is, Take aim with thy bow and arrow at the enemy, be prosperous or successful in the aim taken, ride on in pursuit of the flying foe, in the cause of religious truth, evangelical humility and righteousness, and thy own right hand shall show thee wonderful things. In these last words, the Saviour effecting everything by his own power, is represented as a champion, prompted by his own courage, relying on his own strength and skill, to attempt what might seem impracticable. Wonderful, indeed, and most blessed were the effects produced by the preaching of the Gospel in the overthrow of idolatry and pagan superstition, and the establishment of Christianity with all its mild and beneficial influences over the greater part of the world."

The idea of warfare is carried on in the fifth verse, as you will see immediately in reading it, Mrs. P.

Mrs. P. (Verse 5.) "*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under them.*"

Mrs. C. I have much to tell you of Bishop Horsley's remarks on this part, describing a war, which, it is evident, must be quite unlike the wars of this world, inasmuch as they tend to destroy the lives of men, while this is to preserve their souls.

The sword and the arrows, weapons of war, are emblems of the word of God, in its different effects and ways of operation on the minds of men. The word of God may be divided into two parts; first, the word of reproof, commination, and terror,—holding up to the sinner the picture of himself,—setting forth the turpitude of sin, the holiness of God, God's hatred of unrighteousness, and alarming the conscience with the danger of a state of enmity with God, and with denunciations of implacable wrath and endless punishment. Secondly, the word of persuasion and hope which sets before the penitent the riches of God's mercy displayed in the scheme of man's redemption,—points to the cross where man's guilt was expiated,—bids the contrite sinner rely on the Redeemer's intercession,—offers the daily supply of grace, to confirm him in his resolutions, and assist him in his endeavours to conform himself to the preeepts and example of the Saviour,—and promises victory and glory to them

that persevere; turning despondency into hope, and fear into love.

The first is the sword, which, as we have seen, is frequently used in a figure in this sense, in the Holy Scriptures; the second is the arrow, which may be fitly compared to the word of promise as entering quickly and sharply.

Mrs. P. Shall I now read the sixth verse?

Mrs. C. We must for a few moments return to the "glory" and "majesty" named at the end of the third verse.

The defensive armour of the king, which here appears to be distinguished, may be understood, Bishop Horsley says, to signify whatever is admirable and amiable in the external form and appearance of the Christian religion. First, the character of Jesus: His piety towards God, His love and goodness towards men, His meekness, humility, ready forgiveness of injuries, patient endurance of pain and death. Secondly, the same light of good works shining, in a less degree, in the lives of his disciples, particularly the apostles and martyrs. Thirdly, whatever is decent and seemly in the government, discipline, and rites of the Church. All these things tended to the effect of making people fall under or before Him.

Now, if you please, you had better read both the sixth and seventh verses.

Mrs. P. (Verse 6.) "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*" (Verse 7.) "*Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*"

Mrs. C. This passage could not have been addressed to Solomon or any other earthly monarch.

Mrs. P. No, madam; that is evident from the words "for ever and ever."

Mrs. C. We have the authority of St. Paul for applying it to our Saviour, as in his epistle to the Hebrews, he quotes these two verses as addressed by God Himself to His Son. (Heb. i. 8, 9.) In his epistle to the Romans, he declares, "Christ is over all, God blessed for ever." (Rom. ix. 5.) And in that to the Philippians, "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name."

John the Baptist, speaking of Jesus Christ at the commencement of His earthly ministry, said, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure," (that is, with any limitation,) "unto Him." (St. John iii. 34.) In the book of Revelation, He is called "King of kings, and Lord of lords." (Rev. xix. 16.)

All this is consonant to what had been foretold of

Him by Isaiah, "The government shall be on his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah ix. 6.)

We have now concluded the second section; but as the latter is the larger half of the Psalm, and there is much to be said upon it, I think, if you please, Mrs. Penrice, we had better leave it till I call on you again, which shall be some day soon.

Mrs. P. If you please, madam. I fear your kindness to me has already kept you out later than may be quite agreeable to you.

II.

Mrs. C. Good day to you, Mrs. Penrice. I have not forgotten our agreement, that I should call on you as soon as I could, that we might talk over the remainder of the 45th Psalm.

Mrs. P. I was sure you would not forget your kind promise, madam, and I have been longing for the time to come.

Mrs. C. In order to refresh my memory, I have been looking again over Bishop Horsley's learned and satisfactory exposition of this passage of inspired writing; and I have much to tell you on the subject, which I think will be very interesting to you.

Mrs. P. I have no doubt that it will be, madam; since you were good enough to explain the first part to me, I have read it to myself, and feel that I now understand it much better than I did before.

Mrs. C. I have brought with me the volume which contains Bishop Horsley's sermons on this Psalm, that I may read aloud to you some passages from them; and also a manuscript book of my own, in which I have written extracts from various books, as I think you may like to hear some of them.

Mrs. P. You are very kind to me, madam.

Mrs. C. We come now to the third section of the Psalm, comprehending the verses from the 8th to the end, and representing the second advent of our Lord, the consummation of the Church's happiness, and Messiah's glory here on earth, figured by the public marriage of the great King with the wife of his love.

Mrs. P. You mentioned this before, madam, but it seems beyond my comprehension; and do you not think there are many parts of the Bible, this among others, which are so difficult to understand, that it appears wrong for us to try to make out what we might almost imagine was purposely concealed from us?

Mrs. C. We should be very wrong to refuse our assent to any part of the revealed religion till it appeared quite clear to us; or to expect with our limited capacities to be able to account for all the dispensations of Almighty wisdom. But I am sure, my good Mrs. Penrice, you are sufficiently well read in the Bible to remember that our Saviour, expos-

tulating with the Jews on their disbelief of His divinity after His cure of the blind man, recommended them to "Search the Scriptures;" (St. John v. 39,)—that the Bereans were commended by St. Luke for searching the Scriptures daily; (Acts xvii. 11)—and that St. Paul observes, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime," (that is, in the Old Testament,) "were written for our learning." And I think we may feel well assured, that if we go to the study of the Bible with an earnest desire to acquire the knowledge that may conduce to the honour of God and the salvation of our own nothingness, we shall be blessed with the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to enable us to understand all that is needful for us. That there are some difficulties and obscurities in the Bible, it is impossible to deny. St. Peter speaks of "things hard to be understood;" (2 Pet. iii. 16;) but they are such things only as never could have been understood at all, had they not been revealed; and, being revealed, are yet not capable of proof or explanation upon scientific principles, but rest solely on the authority of the revelation. But these things, though hard for the pride of philosophy, are—and great cause of thankfulness have we that such is the case,—easy of digestion to an humble faith.

I cannot help dwelling a little on this subject, be-

cause it is so illustrative of the goodness and mercy of God, so full of comfort to those in particular who are not blessed with a large proportion of this world's goods.

It was predicted of our Lord by the prophet Isaiah, that "with righteousness" He should "judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth;" (Isaiah xi. 4;) that "the meek should increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men" should "rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."

Mrs. P. You bring again to my recollection, madam, that passage in the book of Isaiah of which we spoke on Christmas Day. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the Gospel, or good tidings, unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;" (Isa. lxi. 1, 2;) which we know was prophetic of our blessed Lord, because He himself so applied it, when He selected that as the portion of Scripture to read aloud, according to the Jewish custom, in the synagogue at Nazareth. (Luke iv. 18.)

Mrs. C. He did indeed preach the Gospel to the poor in fortune, the poor in spirit, and the poor in religious knowledge.

Mrs. P. I often think, too, with great satisfaction of the commencement of our Lord's sermon on the mount,—"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. v. 3.)

Mrs. C. I remember the remark made by another prelate, to whom we are much indebted, Bishop Porteus, that our Lord, in the very outset of His public instructions, marked at once, in the strongest and most decided terms, the peculiar temper, spirit, and character of His religion; and showed His disciples how completely opposite they were to all those splendid and popular qualities which were the great objects of applause and admiration to the heathen world.

I dare say you remember also, that when John the Baptist, for the conviction and satisfaction of his disciples, sent two of them to Jesus, asking Him, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" one of the arguments our Lord used, as a proof of His being the promised Messiah, was, that "the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." (Matt. xi. 5.)

Mrs. P. Yes, madam; I do indeed remember it, and often think of it with much thankfulness.

Mrs. C. By "the poor" may either be meant the poor and humble in spirit; or, in the literal sense, persons of mean condition, who were neglected and contemned by the proud Scribes and Pharisees, but with whom Christ saw fit to converse, and to whom He imparted the doctrines of divine wisdom.

Archbishop Secker observes, that the words of St. James also, in his epistle to the Jewish Christians, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him," (James ii. 5,) afford a strong consolation to those who are beset with straits and hardships in this life, in the assurance, that however depressed may be their temporal concerns, we are all on a level as to our eternal interests; or, if there be any difference, it is in favour of the suffering part of mankind.

Mrs. P. Most comforting indeed are these and other passages of Holy Scripture of a similar nature.

Mrs. C. I must read to you the remark made by another bishop of our church, Dr. Isaac Lowth, —"The planting of the Gospel was a remarkable triumph over the power and the wisdom of men,

when God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the things which were wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which were mighty; and under every advancement of Christ's kingdom, the poor and the humble, those that despised the world and have been despised by it, are to have a particular share in the glory and success of it."

We have wandered a little from our subject, but I cannot regret it; for we have been speaking of things interesting to all Christians.

Mrs. P. I am sure it has been so to me, madam.

Mrs. C. We will now return to the observations of Bishop Horsley. Our Lord said of Himself, as we have seen, that He came to preach the Gospel to the poor; and the same thing may be said of the word of revelation in general, that it was given for the instruction of all mankind, the lowest as well as the highest, the most illiterate as well as the wise and learned; and if with any difference, with a special regard to the benefit of those, who, from their condition, were the most deficient in the means of natural improvement.

Obscurities have arisen from the great antiquity of the sacred writings, from the changes time makes in language, from some points of ancient history become dark and doubtful. But these affect only

particular passages, and bring no difficulty on the general doctrine of revelation, the only thing of perpetual and universal importance. Throughout the Bible, we find that in all ages the method of teaching employed by the Holy Spirit has been by figurative expressions, images, and allusions, taken either from the most striking objects of the senses in the works of nature, or from human life.

Mrs. P. Yes, madam; that must be quite evident to all who are but moderately acquainted with the book which is our great instructor and comforter.

Mrs. C. Now to come more immediately to the subject we have before us; nothing in the material world could adequately typify the relation between Christ and his Church; and nothing in human life could so aptly represent it as the relation of husband and wife in the holy state of wedlock. It was the notion of the ancient Jews, that the relation of the Saviour and the Church was typified by the union of our first parents Adam and Eve; and St. Paul gives a sanction to this notion, while exhorting the Ephesian husbands and wives to their respective and relative duties, in the passage we formerly noticed.

Mrs. P. I remember it quite well, madam.

Mrs. C. The union in both cases, one spiritual, the other natural, is an union of the most entire af-

fection, and warmest mutual love between two parties, one of whom is greatly superior to the other. The union is also indissoluble, except by the misconduct of the weaker side. The next resemblance is in the never-failing protection and support afforded by the husband to the wife, and the entire and exclusive affection, and the surrender of the whole heart and mind of the wife to the husband.

Mrs. P. Ah! madam, I have often wished that I could love God as much as my husband. I always knew it was what I ought to do, yet felt that I could not.

Mrs. C. I fear we are all too apt to forget the Giver in the gift, and to allow the creature to usurp in our hearts the place the Creator ought to hold there; nay, indeed, to consider the blessings conferred on us as so entirely our own, that we are not to be deemed unreasonable when we murmur at their being withdrawn.

Mrs. P. Still, as our merciful Father knows what is in our hearts, and how difficult it is for us to overcome our grief at such times, He will, I hope, forgive us.

Mrs. C. No doubt He will, if we do not wilfully give way to excessive sorrow, but endeavour to submit patiently to his decrees, which we know must be both wise and merciful. And we have the comfortable assurance that our blessed Saviour,

when He took our nature upon Him, became, if it were possible, still more intimately acquainted with all the feelings belonging to it, and gave the proof of His entering into the sorrows of immortal beings by His weeping at the grave of Lazarus.

Mrs. P. I am sure the thought of those tears has often helped to dry mine.

Mrs. C. I doubt it not, and of very many humble and true believers. Let us now return to our Psalm. The figure of marriage is used in various parts of Holy Writ. Sometimes the whole Church is taken as the wife. Sometimes the Church is considered as consisting of two great branches, the Church of the natural Israel, and the Church of the Gentiles. Then the former is the wife, or queen consort, and the Gentile congregations are her daughters, or ladies of her court. The type is used in this manner, as we have seen, more than once by the prophet Isaiah. The Psalmist opens this part by describing the magnificence of the court of the king Messiah, as you will perceive if you read the 8th verse.

Mrs. P. (Verse 8.) "*All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*"

Mrs. C. Perfumes indicate elegance and splendour of dress as being an object of highest refinement in the Eastern nations of antiquity. The

oil for the consecration of Aaron was, at the command of God, prepared from two of the perfumes here mentioned, myrrh and cassia, with some other ingredients, as we learn from the 30th chapter of Exodus; and the fragrance spread around may be considered as an emblem of the heavenly graces of Christ, diffused like sweet odour over His faithful servants. Ivory was very precious amongst the ancients, and is still much used by the Eastern nations in the adornment of their houses.

Bishop Horsley would rather translate this verse, "Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia, excelling the palaces of ivory, excelling those which delight thee;"—and he remarks upon it, that the perfumed garments of the king in this Psalm, and those of the high priest under the Mosaic dispensation, were typical,—first, of the graces and virtues of the Redeemer Himself in His human character; secondly, of whatever is refreshing, encouraging, consoling, cheering, in the external ministration of the Word; thirdly, of the internal comforts of the Holy Spirit. Though far inferior, still holy and precious and pleasing to God, are the faith, devotion, and good works of His saints, typified by the incense burning on the golden altar in the tabernacle erected by Moses. So does the value of all our best works of faith and obedience sink into nothing when contrasted with the exuberant mercy of God extended

to us through Christ, and the consolations received by the faithful under all sufferings from Him; consisting of the example of His holy life, the ministration of the word and sacraments, and the succours of the Holy Spirit.

Then follow descriptions figurative of the glory of the Church in its final condition of purity and peace.

Mrs. P. (Verse 9) "*Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women, upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*"

Mrs. C. Bishop Horsley's version is, "Kings' daughters are among the bright beauties of thy court; at thy right hand the consort has her station in standard gold of Ophir."

By the "kings' daughters," seems to be meant the great kingdoms and empires of the world, which after being converted to the Christian faith, will be united in glory and happiness at Christ's second advent.

The beauty of the attendant ladies must mean the beauty of evangelical sanctity and innocence. The splendour of the queen, the gold of Ophir being the finest known to the ancients, denotes the word of God and the gifts of peace and forgiveness, truly great treasures; the queen being thought to designate the Hebrew Church reunited by her conversion to her husband. Besides those passages to which

we referred on Christmas Day, where Isaiah describes the separation from misconduct, and the reconciliation on the repentance and amendment of the wife, we have as a counterpart the whole book of the prophecy of Hosea. He dwells throughout on the temporary rejection of the posterity of Israel, as an unfaithful and erring wife is separated from her husband, and foretells their restoration to favour with the following kind and encouraging words: "I will speak comfortably unto her; I will give her a door of hope, and she shall sing then as in the days of her youth. I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." (Hos. ii. 14, 15, 19, 20.) Then there is a passage in Isaiah, we might also fancy as a reply to this, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with costly ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isaiah lxi. 10.)

St. Paul affords us a comment on those passages in the Old Testament, wherein the punishment of the rebellious people of God, and their ultimate participation in the benefits of salvation, are represented

by the first disgraced, and then pardoned wife, in his epistle to the Roman Christians, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved . . . . they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." (Rom. xi. 25, 28.)

I think it will not be irrelevant to the subject that principally engages our attention if I read you some extracts from various scripture commentators. On these words of St. Paul, "The apostle here proves that the rejection of the Jews was neither total nor final; not total, because 'blindness happened to Israel' only 'in part;' not final, but for a time only, namely, 'till the fulness of the Gentiles' should 'be come in;' that is, till the time of the more complete conversion of the Gentiles — 'and so all Israel shall be saved'— that is, called and put into a state of salvation, converted, by coming into the Christian church, they shall have the means of salvation bestowed upon them, 'beloved for the fathers' sakes.' Although they be cast off for their unbelief, yet, in consequence of the promises made to their fathers, the Jews are at some future period again to become the people of God by believing the Gospel."

Mrs. P. But, madam, in the next verse it is said,—"The gifts and calling of God are without

repentance." What can that mean? Surely none can hope to receive the gifts of God without first repenting them of their sins. That appears in all the declarations of our Lord, of His forerunner John the Baptist, and of His apostles, to be the groundwork for the reception of the offers contained in the Gospel.

Mrs. C. You are quite right, my good Mrs. Penrice. But all learned persons seem to understand the meaning of the passage without controversy to be, that God will not repent of the special favours allowed to this people, and His promises made to their fathers; because promises of this kind are founded upon such grounds as cannot be altered, even upon the original, fixed, and permanent designs, intentions, and constitutions of all-wise Providence in the government of the world through successive ages, of which they are partial declarations or revelations.

Mrs. P. I ought to apologize perhaps, madam, for having interrupted you with this question.

Mrs. C. Not at all. I am glad you mentioned the subject if you had any doubt about it.

Will you now, if you please, read the 10th and 11th verses.

Mrs. P. (Verse 10.) "*Hearken, O daughter! and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*" (Verse

11.) "*So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.*"

Mrs. C. These two verses Bishop Horsley alters very little in his translation. He supposes the Psalmist to stop in his description of the queen, and to give in imagination this advice to her: "Hearken, O daughter! and consider; incline thine ears; and forget thine own people and thy father's house: so shall the king set his heart upon thy beauty; truly he is thy Lord; therefore worship thou him." We know that it is the duty of a wife to consider herself as belonging to her husband's family, and a sharer in all that concerns him; and that more especially if a princess from a distant land were to be united in marriage with a great king, she would be recommended to endeavour to forget in appearance all that was peculiar to her own country, and to learn to accommodate herself and adopt the language, customs, &c., of her husband's country. So is the Hebrew Church to abandon the ancient Jewish rites, and to become pure Christian.

We may now go on, if you please, with David's prophetic representation of the royal marriage.

Mrs. P. (Verse 12.) "*And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.*"

Mrs. C. Ancient Tyre was a large and flourish-

ing city, and was not more famous for its wealth and splendour than it was infamous for its gross idolatry and wickedness. The daughter of Tyre must designate a church established, either at Tyre, or in some country represented by the image of Tyre; and her coming with a gift was a figurative prediction of churches being established under the protection of governments, in countries, which had before been distinguished for profligacy and irreligion. The first five verses of the 55th chapter of Isaiah are an invitation to all the nations to accept the gracious offers of Christ. Will you turn to that chapter, Mrs. Penrice, and read those verses aloud?

Mrs. P. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him—"

Mrs. C. That must mean Christ.

Mrs. P. "Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee, shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for He hath glorified thee."

Mrs. C. Similar are the predictions which occupy the whole of the 60th chapter of Isaiah, of which the first verse, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee,"—is thought to be particularly addressed to Jerusalem, who is bid to arise and give light to all about her, to communicate to others part of the honour and lustre which she had received from God, the true Sun of Righteousness.

The prediction in the 24th verse of the 21st chapter of Revelation, that "the kings of the earth" should "bring their glory and honour" to the new Jerusalem, seems to point to the fulfilment of that in the verse under consideration.

But we must remember that the riches of a church are spiritual, and consist of the holy lives of its members, the truth of its creeds, the purity of its worship, and the favour of God. With these, we are led to suppose, the churches of the formerly Gentile nations will pay homage to their elder sister when restored to God's favour.

The Psalmist then goes on describing this figurative personage. Will you read, if you please, the next three verses?

Mrs. P. (Verse 13.) "*The King's Daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.*" (Verse 14.) "*She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework; the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee.*" (Verse 15.) "*With gladness and rejoicings shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace.*"

Mrs. C. Bishop Horsley's version, and probably the correct one, of these verses is, "She is all glorious, Daughter of a King; her inner garment is bespangled with gold; her upper garment is embroidered with the needle; she is conducted in procession to the king. Virgins follow her! her companions, coming unto thee. They are conducted in procession, with festivity and rejoicing: They enter the palace of the King."

Mrs. P. I always imagined "the King's Daughter" was only another term for Princess.

Mrs. C. Undoubtedly; and the words that follow intimate that she was glorious in herself from her high extraction. This also represents the inward purity of God's true Church and people, cleansed by the blood of Christ and the washing of the Holy Ghost; and the clothing of wrought gold

shows the excellence of the character, services, and ordinances of the Church, and that she would adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things. The spangles on the bride's dress, like the gold of Ophir, before mentioned, indicate the treasures committed to the Church; the embroidery of her upper garment, in which the ancients were very curious and expert, indicates beauty in the external form, discipline, and rites of the Church. As the bride of the king, figured in the Psalm, was to be adorned with rich and splendid attire, so should the true children of God be decked, not with external ornaments, "that outward adorning of wearing of gold, but the hidden man of the heart, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Pet. iii. 3.)

So in the Revelation, the bride of the Lamb is described as being "arrayed in fine linen, clean, and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints;" arrayed in the pure, simple, though resplendent garments, which are the clothing of the heavenly inhabitants. She "had washed her robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." By faith in her Redeemer she is become righteous; for this is the "fine linen, the righteousness of saints." (Rev. xix. 8.)

The queen being conducted to the king's palace in this manner, seems to represent that assistance is to be given to Israel by Gentile nations become Chris-

tian. To that the 18th chapter of Isaiah is thought by some to point; but as all have confessed it to be very obscure, it probably may be better not to attempt to interpret it till the succession of years and events shall have made it more clear. Also the tenth verse of the third chapter of Zephaniah, —"From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughters of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."

Also two other passages from Isaiah,—"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." (Isa. xlix. 22, 23.)

Mrs. P. Allow me, madam, to interrupt you with a question,—What could be the meaning of "the daughters being carried upon their shoulders?"

Mrs. C. It is a literal fact. That custom is much practised in the eastern countries. The other expression of bowing down with "the face toward the earth," &c., is also in strict accordance with the ceremonious forms in the courts of

eastern princes. And the whole passage imports the assistance, submission, deference, and veneration, that the Gentiles and their kings and queens should one day afford and pay to the church of God.

Mrs. P. There was another passage you said, madam, from Isaiah.

Mrs. C. Yes. It is in his last chapter. "The Gentiles shall bring all your brethren, for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain, Jerusalem, unto the Lord." (Isa. lxvi. 20.)

The virgins attendant on the queen may be the new churches that will be formed by the conversion of some of the Gentile nations at the same time as the restoration of the Hebrew Church in a purified state; making that fulness of the Gentiles before mentioned, and spoken by St. Paul in the 11th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans,—"Have they," that is, the Israelites, "stumbled that they should fall?" irrecoverably and so as to be never more capable of being the people of God? "God forbid! but rather, through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles;" that is, upon the refusal of the Jews to embrace the Gospel; the wisdom of God has ordained the knowledge and means of salvation to be preached to the Gentiles; "for to provoke them to jealousy"—that is, to excite the

Jews to emulation of the faith and obedience of the Gentiles. "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world" — meaning the Gentiles as opposed to the Jews—" and the diminishing," or the loss, "of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" that is, the coming of the Jews to the faith of Christ. In this passage the apostle's meaning appears to be, that the general conversion of the Jews will afford to the Gentiles the most complete evidence of the truth of the Gospel, by showing them that it is the finishing of a grand scheme, which God had been carrying on for the salvation of mankind, by means of His dispensation towards the Jews. He goes on a little farther to say,—"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world,"—that is, a means of sending and spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles, and so of bringing them into the Church, and obtaining pardon for them upon their repentance,—" what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"—that is, it shall be matter of the greatest joy, such as receiving a dead friend raised to life again would be; and this the more, because the general conversion of the Jews shall be accompanied or attended with the general conversion of the rest of the world.

I have a little more to say on this subject; but I believe it will be better to postpone it for a little time, and to go on reading the Psalm.

Mrs P. (Verse 16.) "*Instead of thy fathers, shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands.*"

Mrs. C. Bishop Horsley would read this with a very slight variation. "Thy children shall be in the place of thy fathers, thou shalt make them princes in all the earth,"—which would be thus interpreted,—"Thy children shall be what their fathers were, God's peculiar people, and they shall hold a distinguished rank and character in the earth." This promise might be supposed to compensate to the bride for the renouncement of her Father's house enjoined in the 10th verse; and another commentator (Travell) gives us this paraphrase,—"And may this be the happy fruit of the marriage, that instead of thy royal ancestors, thou mayest be the mother of children who shall be rulers in all countries; so shall the Church continually bring forth children unto Christ, whom He shall make kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 10.)

We are now come to the last verse.

Mrs. P. (Verse 17.) "*I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever.*"

Mrs. C. In the last verse the Psalmist gives us the end he proposed to himself in inditing this song; in which he hoped the Redeemer's name

name might be celebrated through a succession of ages. It might thus be paraphrased,—"By this song, I will make thy name to be mentioned with honour throughout all ages, which shall celebrate thy praise as long as the world shall last; and much more shall the name of Christ and His blessed union with His Church be celebrated with perpetual praises." Truly and fully has the wish of the pious king David been realized. This prediction of his inspired pen has lasted nearly three thousand years. It was composed one thousand and forty years before the birth of Christ, and during that time kept up in the synagogue the expectation of the coming of the Messiah. Since that period, which is more than eighteen centuries to the present time, it has been to Christians a remembrancer of the past, an index of attention to the present, and a token of hope for the future; for surely will our Lord come again, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and to set up a standard for the nations who yet sit in darkness and the shadow of death. This is evident from the declaration of the angel in the vision, vouchsafed to St. John the Divine during his banishment in the isle of Patmos, —"The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And

let him that heareth say, Come! He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. xxii. 6, 7, 17, 20.)

I have now, Mrs. Penrice, given you the substance of Bishop Horsley's Sermons on the Forty-fifth Psalm, with the remarks of some other writers on various parts of it. And it is now time for me to be going home, else I should much like to read to you some extracts I have written in this manuscript book of mine, as they are in no slight degree connected with the subject of our conversation. But if you will allow me, I will come again to-morrow for that purpose.

Mrs. P. I need not say, madam, that your visits are always acceptable, and therefore that I cannot be otherwise than thankful for anything that procures me that pleasure.

III.

Mrs. C. Here I am, according to my promise, Mrs. Penrice, and I think you will agree with me in considering the passages I proposed reading to you as very interesting, and will deem the topics therein discussed are by no means unprofitable for our meditation.

Mrs. P. I am quite sure, madam, that it must be my fault if I am not the better for anything that you consider it worth while to tell or read to me.

Mrs. C. My extracts relate to the Jews. You know we found, when endeavouring to interpret rightly the predictions of the 45th Psalm, that they appeared to refer in great part to the conversion and restoration of that remarkable race.

Mrs. P. I was thinking much of them, while I lay awake last night, as I often do; and though some complain greatly of their sleep being inter-

rupted, I am much disposed to believe that this is one of the many means our merciful Father is graciously pleased to use to bring us nearer to Himself. In the still hours of the night, we seem to be alone with Him; and we have nothing to interrupt our reflections on all we have heard and read of His Holy Word, His wonderful works, His awful threats, His gracious promises, and His unspeakable abounding mercies. Then I call to mind those words of the Psalmist, "Mine eyes prevent the night-watches that I might meditate in thy word." (Psalm cxix. 48.)

Mrs. C. I am sure, my worthy friend, the hours you so spend must be blessed. And I wish all persons would thus turn to profit the opportunities which I am convinced all would find more or less, if they would see and use them, to improve for the benefit of their souls.

But what were you going to tell me of your last night's waking thoughts?

Mrs. P. I was wishing principally that the Jews could read and understand the Holy Scriptures as we do. It is so sad to think that any should refuse to lay hold of such comfort as they offer to us.

Mrs. C. Assuredly every true Christian must desire that all his fellow-creatures should participate with himself in the blessings he enjoys so largely.

This, you will find, is very much the tenor of the observations I am now, with your leave, going to read to you, on the dispersion and present state of the Jews.

Mrs. P. Who are they by, madam, may I ask?

Mrs. C. Benson, an eminent preacher of the Gospel, still living, and chiefly known to the world by a course of lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, which he preached before the University of Cambridge. It was in one of those that he made these observations. He had been speaking of the predictions of our Lord Himself respecting Jerusalem, recorded by St. Luke, "When He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. In those days there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles until the

times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (St. Luke xix. 41—44, and 21, 23, 24.) On this Benson remarks, that "the accomplishment of this prophecy of our Saviour, in the full and final destruction of Jerusalem and her inhabitants, and in their present state, forms one of the most interesting and instructive portions of the history of the world which can fall under the contemplation of a Christian,—and our consideration of it may tend to confirm our faith and improve our virtue. It is impossible not to mark the care and goodness of God in recording the fulfilment as well as the words of this memorable prophecy. The same Providence by which these events were made known unto Jesus, and the same Spirit by which He was commissioned to reveal them to mankind, raised up, from among the very Jews themselves, an historian, Josephus by name, to relate the accomplishment of the prediction in every part, and confirm to the latest generations the truth of the Gospel. The resemblance is sometimes so strong between the history and the prophecy, that the very words are almost the same."

Mrs. P. How curious that is, madam!

Mrs. C. It is indeed. Yet there cannot be the shadow of a suspicion as to the faithfulness of the testimony; nor could it be the intention of Josephus, thus to bear witness to the authority of Jesus, for he ever was the enemy of that Prophet and of

His religion. Much reason have we for thankfulness in making this observation; because it teaches us the superintending wisdom of our heavenly Father in over-ruling the words, as well as the works, of man, and His abundant kindness in supplying us with the best and most unsuspicious means of becoming acquainted with the minutest occurrences in that portion of the revolutions of the world, which, of all others, it is perhaps the most important for us to know. The woes denounced against Jerusalem were most literally and minutely accomplished in the almost unheard of sufferings attendant on the siege of that city, and its utter destruction by the Romans.

Mrs. P. I think a neighbour of mine has the history of the Jews by Josephus; I shall ask her to lend it to me.

Mrs. C. I have no doubt that you will find it very interesting.

But there is a part of the prophecy still taking place in our days. It is long since the ruin of Jerusalem, and many years and ages have passed away since they laid "her even with the ground, and her children within" her; "Jerusalem" is and has been "trodden underfoot of the Gentiles," ever since the day of her desolation, and, as yet, "the time of the Gentiles" has not been "fulfilled." Vain have been all attempts to restore Jerusalem to what she was,

and to rebuild her temple. "Gentiles, neither of the race nor the religion of Judah, are still masters of Jerusalem; she is in her adversity; but, wasted as she is, she yet bears, in her lost estate, an everlasting testimony to the Gospel of our God; and her children also bear witness with her. Go where you will, and in every nation under heaven, in the east and in the west, in the north and in the south, in the snowy mountain and in the sandy desert, in every city, and almost in every village, you will behold the face of some exiled Israelite, fulfilling, in his destiny, the prophecy of the Lord. There is something peculiarly remarkable and apparently providential in this universal dispersion of the people of God. They are to be found in all nations, and in all nations they are found 'despised and rejected of men,' without a home and without a country, and for the most part without the rights or the protection of other citizens. Why then does not the Jew turn his steps towards the land of his fathers after which he sighs, and endeavour to console his sorrows by living and dying in that Judea, and beside that Jordan, which he loves? Why is it, but because the same Jesus hath said, that "Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled!'"

Mrs. P. This is all very striking, and I think would alone furnish a proof of the divinity of our

blessed Lord, for none but God could have foreseen and fore-ordained things so distant and so improbable.

Mrs. C. This confirmation of our faith is not however the only lesson we may learn from the punishment of the Jews.

"Let the ruin of Jerusalem be to us a warning to beware of Jerusalem's sins. The woe was indeed for her, and for her inhabitants, alone; but the moral is for us, and for our children, for ever. For what were the Jews? A nation. So are we. A nation, to whom the oracles of God were committed. So are we. A nation, who had every means afforded to them of improving the gift. So have we. A nation who neglected to improve the gift unto their own salvation, and were therefore visited, in vengeance, with calamity and death. So also may we be visited, unless we cease from our sins. They despised the religion and power of Jesus. They would have none of His counsel, and they obeyed none of His commandments; and they gave no heed unto His words, and no reverence unto His name. They rejected and crucified the Lord of life, and filled up the measure of their forefathers' iniquity; and behold! they are driven as murderers over the face of the whole earth. Sins, like theirs, may be committed in every age; and sufferings like theirs, may fall upon any nation. To despise the religion and the power of the Son of God,—to deny His

divinity,—to forget His laws,—to hate His followers, and to crucify the Son of God afresh in the wickedness of our lives, are crimes which are confined to no rank, or station, or country; and it is always in the will of a Holy, and the power of an Almighty God, to punish the evildoers for the evil they have done. The Gentile, as well as the Jew, may sin against his Redeemer and his God; and like the Jew, be scattered abroad in the breath of God's anger. For what merit hath the Gentile more than the Jew; or what city of the earth can have more claims for mercy than the towers and the temple of Jerusalem?"

"This record at least we must bear unto the nation, that Jerusalem was the chosen seat, and the Jews were the chosen people of God. And how can we think of the glory of their descent and their election, without feeling for them the reverence which is due to an elder brother in the faith? How can we meet with one of these monuments of God's indignation and wrath, walking in loneliness through the streets and multitudes of a mighty population, without recalling the words and warnings of St. Paul, 'If God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest He also spare not thee? Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity, but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise, thou

also shalt be cut off. For because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not, therefore, high-minded, but fear.' (Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22.) Let us, therefore, fear to offend the Maker, the Redeemer, the Judge of all. Let us fear to forfeit the gentle and enlightening influences of the Sanctifier. Let us fear to 'tread underfoot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.' (Heb. x. 29.) Above all, let us fear the loss of our own immortal souls; and fear to depend for their salvation upon anything but the sacrifice of the Cross, and the merits, and the mediation, and the power of Jesus Christ, 'for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.'" (Rom. xi. 36.)

"Let us remember, lastly, that the vices of Jerusalem were the cause of its ruin, the source whence its misfortunes sprung, and by which its evils were aggravated and enlarged. Her perversions of Scripture; her pollution of the fountain of truth; her reliance upon man and herself; her pride, her worldliness, her wickedness; her false, her carnal, her ambitious views of the Messiah's character, were the origin of all that fatal obstinacy in error, and of all that incurable blindness to better and holier things, which brought upon her a load of such merited wretchedness, as neither the warnings of her Saviour, nor the wishes and labours, even of her

enemies, were able to avert. 'His blood be upon us and upon our children,' was the fearful imprecation of these lost ones upon themselves; and the vengeance they called for came. These are memorials for every generation of man to meditate upon, and speak to us in a language, which, if we will but think, we cannot but understand; a caution to watch with a godly sincerity over our waywardness, to beware of the corruptions of human reasoning, to subdue the thoughts into an early obedience to the doctrines of Scripture, to hold fast to the naked simplicity of the Gospel, and to guard the genuine truth of God with uninterrupted care and diligence, lest, after having often desired to gather us under His wings, and we would not, He should at last cast us away utterly from His presence, and our house, like that of Jerusalem, should be left unto us desolate."

Mrs. P. We should indeed consider the Jews as an awful warning to ourselves. The reflections you have been so kind to read to me are most just and forcible. I conclude they are all from the writer you mentioned, Mr. Benson, as you have read on continuously.

Mrs. C. Yes, they are all his, and so excellent, that I do not think any one, if he attempted it, could improve upon them.

Here is a short passage on the same subject from

the writings of another excellent man, the Rev. Henry Blunt.

Mrs. P. Is he a modern writer also, madam?

Mrs. C. He has been both a celebrated writer and preacher in our own times, but unfortunately, as it would seem to us, it pleased God to remove him early from a career of extensive usefulness.

In speaking of the curses denounced against the disobedient Israelites, who, rejecting their own mercies, should be sold into a land that was not theirs, and scattered throughout the nations of the earth; he says, "How truly and how literally this curse has been poured forth, let all history record, and all observation verify. There is no nation in Christendom where the scattered Israelites are not found, and yet there is not one with which they are intermingled. Alone in the thickest multitude, the outcast Jew is ever to be distinguished, his peculiar physiognomy severing him from all around; and although, by the providence of God, his 'leaf does not wither,' yet by the same providence, his stem does not take root; no soil is friendly to it, no climate genial; he lies, as it were, upon the surface, the sport of every wind that blows, and possessing oftentimes the wealth of kings, can call no soil his own but the little spot of ground that serves him for a sepulchre."

Then follow some beautiful lines by one who,

though he could write feelingly of the wretched state of those openly rejecting Christianity, I fear, through his waywardness, tasted little of its comfort.

" Oh! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream ;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell ;
Mourn, where their God hath dwelt, the godless dwell !
And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet ?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet ?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice !
Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest ?
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave !"

Mrs. P. These are most touching lines, and seem to breathe all the compassion with which the subject should inspire us, mingled with humility and thankfulness for ourselves.

Mrs. C. They are, however, a melancholy proof how man may deceive himself and others with vain words ; for alas ! the life and other writings of their author, were sadly at variance with the spirit of Christianity.

My remaining extract is from the works of Bishop Horne, and more strictly in accordance with the subject that we have la tey been considering.

" When we see the Jews for so great a length of time preserved under calamities which would have been long since the ruin of any other people, our regard and attention ought to be strongly excited towards them. Extraordinary was their beginning and their progress; more extraordinary perhaps will be their end; for if they abide not still in unbelief, they, as the natural branches, may surely be grafted in again; and there can be little doubt that such an event will take place. It is said they are dispersed ' until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;' and that ' blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.' It seems evidently to be implied that, at the period mentioned, whenever it shall come, their dispersion will cease, and their blindness be removed. Glorious things are spoken of them by their own prophets, which do not seem as yet to have received their full and proper accomplishment. When the Gentiles had revolted from the true religion, revealed after the fall, the Church subsisted for 2000 years in the family of Abraham. Since the apostacy of the Jews, it hath subsisted nearly the same space of time among the Gentiles. And what saith St. Paul? ' As ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.'

(Rom. xi. 30, 31.) The very mercy shown to the Gentiles is to be a means of bringing the Jews to the faith; and perhaps we can nowhere meet with an instance of a more popular and affectionate turn than that by which St. Paul seems to find a reason for his zeal to convert the Gentiles in his love towards his own countrymen the Jews, that he may thereby provoke them to emulation. Let us second his endeavours to effect this, by our love and good works; let us in our lives and conversations, show them a religion whose attractive excellencies may invite and compel them to embrace it. Nor let us omit to observe that, as Gentiles, while we labour to promote their interest, we likewise shall, by so doing, promote our own. So signal an event as the conversion of the Jews cannot but operate again on the lukewarm and degenerate nations, as well as on those that are still unconverted, to the production of a more plentiful and joyful harvest than hath yet perhaps been seen; 'For if the fall of them were the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness! If the casting away of them were the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?'" (Rom. xi. 12, 15.)

This, you will perceive, Mrs. Penrice, is very much the same as some remarks I quoted to you,

in the former part of our discourse, and I wished, by reading it, to show you how various good and clever men have taken similar views of the subject.

Mrs. P. I am extremely obliged to you, madam, for the kind trouble you have taken in explaining and commenting on this fine Psalm, which I hope I shall never henceforth read without a measure of devotion proportionate to my increased sense of its beauty and meaning.

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